

## *RESULTS OF THE BERLIN DECREE.*

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could only subsist by the exchange of its territorial productions with England, I would open my ports, and give the Swedes gratuitously that general license which Bonaparte sold in detail to intrigue and cupidity.

The Berlin decree could not fail to cause a re-action against the Emperor's fortune by raising up whole nations against him. The hurling of twenty kings from their thrones would have excited less hatred than this contempt for the wants of nations. This profound ignorance of the maxims of political economy caused general privation and misery, which in their turn occasioned general hostility. The system could only succeed in the impossible event of all the powers of Europe honestly endeavoring to carry it into effect. A single free port would have destroyed it. In order to insure its complete success it was necessary to conquer and occupy all countries, and never to evacuate them. As a means of ruining England it was contemptible. It was necessary that all Europe should be compelled by force of arms to join this absurd coalition, and that the same force should be constantly employed to maintain it. Was this possible ? The captain " rapporteur " of a court-martial allowed a poor peasant to escape the punishment due to the offence of having bought a loaf of sugar beyond the custom-house barrier. This officer was some time afterwards at a dinner given by Marshal Davoust; the latter said to him, " You have a very scrupulous conscience, sir; go to headquarters and you will find an order there for you." This order sent him eighty leagues from Hamburg. It is necessary to have witnessed, as I have, the numberless vexations and miseries occasioned by the unfortunate Continental system to understand the mischief its authors did in Europe, and how much that mischief contributed to Napoleon's fall.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The so-called Continental system was framed by Napoleon in revenge for the English very extended system of blockades, after Trafalgar had put it out of his power to attempt to\* keep the seas. The principal decrees were Berlin, 21st November, 1807; Milan, 17th December, 1807; Paris, 11th January, 1808; Antwerp, 25th July, 1810; Trianon, 5th August, 1810; Fontaine-bleau, 19th October, 1810. By these decrees all ports occupied by the French were closed to the English, and all English goods were to be destroyed wherever found in any country occupied by the French. All States under French